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Patterns of Preservation

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PATTERNS OF PRESERVATION

BY

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Abstract

The preservation of historic landmarks and neighborhoods has been accepted as intrinsically valuable and worthwhile. However, as a social process, historic preservation may be subject to class segmentation in terms of access to and use of the process. This paper explores of the patterns of historic preservation in order to shed light on the relationship between underlying social processes and the creation and control of urban form. Has historic preservation occurred equally throughout cities, or has it been concentrated in upper class neighborhoods? A disproportionate rate of incidence might indicate a preference of those in power to use historic preservation as an exclusive form of control over the urban landscape. As such, historic preservation can be better understood as not a democratic process governing the preservation of buildings based on an objective standard but instead a political process through which elite classes vie for control over the appearance and use of the built environment (Lee 2001; Metzger 2001). Additionally, assertions that participation in historic preservation has increased in recent years have been questioned, and closer scrutiny has revealed profit motives (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989; Lee 2001; Reichl 1997).

This study outlines the reasons why historic preservation is vulnerable to becoming an exclusionary form of control over urban form, regulated by a limited tier of socioeconomic classes. It is because of the power of historic preservation that we must be cognizant of the potential for this process to be exploited or systematically biased. Historic preservation, if not better understood, can be used to exclude or privilege one group over another. This research scrutinizes the class

aspect of historic preservation, a process that is an attractor of public funds and political power.

By exploring the relationship between the preservation of historic buildings and districts and the socioeconomic characteristics of residents near the specific preservation sites, this research explores the influence of a social class structure on the incidence of historic preservation. Using the city of Boston as a case study, a closer exploration of the patterns of historic preservation in Boston is undertaken to explain the mutual interaction of physical form and social process of urban morphology that is taking place. A combination of both visual exploration and regression analysis is introduced as a novel and comprehensive approach to understanding a complex social process. The results of this research indicate that historic preservation was concentrated in upper class neighborhoods immediately following the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, but more recent preservation efforts are dispersed throughout the city of Boston.

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Chapter I. Introduction

The urban sociologist Herbert Gans, in debates regarding the actions of New York's Landmarks Preservation Commission, asserted that historic preservation efforts focus on elitist architecture, ignoring representative vernacular structures in working-class neighborhoods (Hayden 1995). He stated, "Private citizens are of course entitled to save their own past, but when preservation becomes a public act, supported with public funds, it must attend to everyone's past" (Gans quoted in Hayden 1995, 3).

By restricting the use or appearance of a building or district, historic preservation becomes a significant force shaping urban form (Allison 1996; Birch and Roby 1984). It is a powerful measure with pervasive effects on both urban landscapes and the symbolic meanings of public spaces (Boyer 1992; Dear 2000; Ford 1995; Zukin 1995). Historic preservation is ostensibly intended to fulfill a public purpose that is narrow and elusive, yet it is widely accepted as inherently valid (Elkadi and Pendlebury 2001). Furthermore, historic preservation, through the passage of federal legislation, has in effect become institutionalized, giving it enhanced power and privileged status among the forces of urban morphology (Birch & Roby 1984).

Because of its power, various elite groups find historic preservation useful for achieving self-serving objectives (Barthel 1996; Kay 1986; Reichl 1997; Simms 1992; Smith 1996). If historic preservation is sought as a means of control over the visual or symbolic form of a city, access to this social process may be restricted, privileging one group over another (Bourdieu 1984; Gregory 1993; Zukin 1982).

The extent to which participation in historic preservation efforts does not represent all segments of the population equally is poorly understood and remains in dispute (Lee 2001; Murtagh 1988; Newman 2001; Zukin 1982). An analysis regarding the biased nature of historic preservation efforts is necessary to determine the fairness of the process and the need for closer examination and oversight.

Historic preservation is a public process with powerful effects. Combining the ambiguity of its public good with the potent nature of its process, historic preservation attracts and creates political power and diverts resources towards an array of objectives. Perpetual vigilance is required to align the intent of historic preservation with its outcomes. This study outlines the difficulty of this alignment as well as the pervasive nature of the effects of preservation. The analysis then examines the class aspect of historic preservation in new ways. A combination of visual exploration and quantitative analysis reveals the relationship between the historic preservation process and the socioeconomic status of a city's residents.

The early sections of this paper explore the need for scrutiny of the historic preservation process, discussing both its powerful impact on the urban landscape and its elusive public purpose. The discussion focuses on the diverse array of interests threatening to appropriate the power of historic preservation for narrow objectives. A discussion follows of how such power struggles manifested themselves in the city of Boston. Using Boston as a case study, a combination of techniques is used to analyze patterns of preservation in order to gain a new awareness of the connection between the physical and social aspects of the process of historic preservation.

Chapter II. The impact of preservation on the urban landscape

The shape of city is a product of "the synthesis of all activities and relations of city subjects" over time (Bobic 1990, 101). More specifically, urban form can be viewed as largely a product of motivated agents (Habraken 1998). As an influence on urban form, historic preservation can be then characterized as the outcome of the power of agents to control the environment. In this way, historic preservation can exert a potent force not only on urban morphology but also on the meanings and interpretations with which the public landscape is imbued.

Historic preservation influences the morphology of a city in a singularly unique fashion. While development results in the creation of a new structure, and demolition results in the removal of an old one, historic preservation entails the solidification of an existing structure or district in a current or former state indefinitely. The decision whether to preserve, adapt, or destroy a historic structure affects the evolution of the form and structure of a city. As an influence on urban morphology, historic preservation is one element of the constant tension between form and function as a city evolves. James Vance points out that "at no period in urban history has a city been simply a matter of contemporary practices, and thus free from either the past or the future." (1990, 22)

In many ways, historic preservation is a recycling of influences on morphology in that it takes elements that influenced the original form of the city and reuses them, adapting them to result in a not altogether new morphology, but rather a new change associated with an existing or former form. Re-use of existing buildings constitutes a redirection of the course of change. In contrast to a renewal process,

which constructs entirely new buildings, re-use involves less change to the physical structure of the city while at the same time adapting through a change in function. Vance recognizes the importance of this flexibility to the urban environment when he points out:

> Not only does adaptation work on the physical structure of cities, but also endless compromise is made between form and function, to the point that the process is more one of mutual transformation than a free rein for function over form. In this fundamental persistence of mutual adaptation, we find the basis for urban evolution and continuity. (1990, 24)

Increased use of historic preservation to affect the city's form reflects the recognition of the need for a flexible reuse of the city's structures as part of the evolution of the city's role. Through adaptive reuse, perhaps historic preservation is representative of the ways in which the city continues its evolution in a quest to remain a functional entity given dynamic social climates.

Similar to other evolutionary processes, changes in urban morphology through historic preservation can be incremental and represent a discontinuity in the urban landscape (Ford 1995). Incremental changes are subtle and often go unnoticed, but they can in aggregate constitute a wholesale metamorphosis over time (Whitehand 1992). This turns out to be a particularly subtle variety of control over a city's shape. It is much more understated than the razing or the creation of a building. Yet, it can be an equally powerful sort of control over the cityscape, more capable of accomplishing some specific aims than the brute force of conventional development.

Historic preservation can affect morphology in additional ways. Over time, cities are forced to integrate new construction in and around preserved period architecture. The difficulty in this is adapting contemporary designs and functions to the scale of the historic landmarks and districts (Tung 2001), especially in light of changing cost structures. Also problematic is maintaining the "environmental legibility – the architectural and cultural cohesion" over time as forms, technologies and values evolve (Tung 2001, 299). At issue is not just the physical integration of new and old but also an integration of the symbolic environment.

The symbolic environment

A symbol is borne of "individual identification with a collective historical identification" (Bobic 1990, 58). Within a societal context, personal identification imbues a physical structure with meaning, transcending its materials and form. Further, monuments result as "the product of specific social structures in a given time interval." (Bobic 1990, 59) Thus, the medium of historic preservation efforts is not merely brick and mortar, but values and ideas, simultaneously private and shared.

On a broader scale, historic preservation affects both a physical and a symbolic morphology. "In the urban morphogenetic tradition the emphasis is on tracing the historical evolution of urban form, through the map and other historical record, and on understanding and uncovering the processes which have led to this evolution." (O'Sullivan 2001, 85) This analysis of the "mutual interaction of the form and process" of urban morphology emphasizes the inseparability of the city and the social forces that mold it (O'Sullivan 2001, 85).

Historic preservation represents a process of affecting the morphology and guiding the evolution of the form and structure of cities through choices to preserve existing buildings as symbolic representations of the past. Historic structures often serve as landmarks which not only lend character and definition to the neighborhoods that surround them but also serve to orient residents and visitors as they travel throughout the city. These landmarks can also come to represent the city symbolically and, consequently, there is interest in preserving them.

Early proponents of landmark protection in New York City lamented the loss of Penn Station and cited it as a need to justify formal legislation. To many, Penn Station symbolized the grandeur of the city, and its loss changed the meaning associated with that geographic location. The loss of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers gives us a contemporary example by which we can consider what it might be like to lose a comparable, prominent landmark in another city. As Steve Pile says:

> Monuments are not just spaces of the body, subjectivity and language, but are also grids of meaning and power, which are complicit in the control and manipulation of simultaneously real and metaphorical space, where for example chairs become thrones, buildings become monuments, and so on (Pile quoted in Dear 2000, 251).

Dear emphasizes that "monuments occupy contested spaces." (2000, 251) When you dictate the way a building looks and you command visual control over that environment, you are preserving that structure as a symbol (Zukin 1995). If the structure is preserved, the symbol is preserved, and then what that structure represents is maintained in perpetuity. In this way, historic preservation seeks not only to control space, but also to control time. If an idea becomes outdated, often the

remnants of that idea may fade or be replaced. But if the symbol remains, the chances increase that the idea that is being represented will persist.

As an example, one of the city's primary functions leading up to the eighteenth century has been "as a place for display, symbolism, and consumption", with production uses remaining outside of the central city until the nineteenth century (Ford 1995, 553). Based on this assessment, present-day conversions of historic structures for the purposes of symbolism and consumption represent a return to this same pattern.

The embrace of the symbols of some of history's accounts at the expense of others can result in "sanitized pasts that eliminate important transitional periods and places" which can be "befuddling" (Ford 1995, 565). More critical than disrupting the legibility of the urban environment, however, is the extent to which historic preservation may save symbols representing particular viewpoints or meanings while other symbols remain threatened. The next chapter explores the notion of historical significance and the role it plays in the historic preservation process.

Chapter III. Preservation in the public realm

Interpretations of early motivations to preserve historic structures include a belief in a consensus that "it was a moral duty." (Elkadi and Pendlebury 2001, 75) To some extent, the intrinsic value of historic preservation continues to go unquestioned. However, there is a complexity associated with historic preservation making it an increasingly controversial process. Preservation largely revolves around the concept of "historic significance" (Ames 1998). The elusive nature of this concept complicates the alignment of the intent of preservation with the public good demanded of the process.

The criteria for listing a property with the National Register are as follows:

1. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
2. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past;
3. Embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. Likelihood of yielding information significant in history or prehistory (National Park Service 2003).

These criteria were adopted at a time when a prevailing viewpoint was that "historical facts come before their interpretation" (Green 1998, 88). Given indisputable facts, historical significance is a simple matter. Yet current critics emphasize that historical significance is subject to interpretation (Green 1998).

Further, our notions of historic significance may be derived largely from present circumstances: it has been said that "every trace of the past is a testament not only to its initiators but to its inheritors, not only to the spirit of the past, but to the perspectives of the present." (Lowenthal 1979, 125) If historic significance is susceptible to disagreement, then the public purpose associated with this process remains equally ambiguous (Lynch 1972).

The power of federal endorsement

The evolution of the use of historic preservation was significantly affected by eventual legislation by Congress. Federal involvement with preservation efforts was limited primarily to monuments and battlefields up until about 1930 (Barthel 1996). During the 1930's, however, the National Park Service embarked on a survey of the architectural features of many historic structures, alerting the public to the built heritage around the nation (Barthel 1996).

The efforts of preservationists began as local and disorganized (Barthel 1996). In the years following the New Deal, as urban projects began to increase in scope, preservationists were forced to follow suit and "enlarge their vision and make their work systematic." (Birch and Roby 1984, 197) The examples of Williamsburg and Charleston demonstrate that preservationists were beginning to formalize their own efforts and, in the process, increase their power to accomplish their objectives (Birch and Roby 1984).

The successful 1959 campaign to save New York City's Carnegie Hall demonstrated the ability of citizens to marshal political support to preserve historic

buildings (Allison 1996). The subsequent inability to stop the Pennsylvania Railroad Company from demolishing Charles McKim's Penn Station garnered attention to the fact that well-loved historic architecture remained perpetually threatened (Allison 1996).

The publicity of both of these events along with commentary from urbanist Kevin Lynch and architecture critic Ada Louis Huxtable awoke an awareness of the urban environment in the public mind (Allison 1996). In particular, Jane Jacobs sought to reveal the intricate order that lay beneath the seemingly chaotic old city that the modernist movement wanted to abandon. This hidden order was not only worthy of preservation but contained the necessary complexity to accommodate the vagaries of human society in a way that modern design could not (O'Sullivan 2001). The preservation of historic structures thus became linked to the vitality of life in the urban neighborhoods that surrounded them. This understanding led to both the public and professional support necessary to put historic preservation on the political agenda (Allison 1996).

Both disinterest in modern architecture and the concern for the ongoing loss of historic structures through the urban renewal process heightened the public's awareness and support for preservation initiatives. Congress recognized the growing political interest in this movement and, in 1966, passed the National Historic Preservation Act, which established a National Register of Historic Places (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989).

Historic preservation through this act can take place through two different procedures. The first designates a specific structure as a historical landmark. The

second gives a particular area a historic designation, creating a "legally binding design review process that regulates demolition, alteration, and construction of buildings within the district." ("Remember" 1981, 8) The protection of federal law legitimized the process of historic designation and preservation. The legal basis of the police power of this legislation was reinforced by subsequent federal and local case law (Birch and Roby 1984).

This powerful act first placed stringent restrictions on any future proposed changes to the appearance of landmarks or buildings within a historic district. Secondly, the act created mechanisms for tax relief and designated funds for the purposes of rehabilitating historic properties (Kanefield 1996). The funds available through the National Trust for Historic Preservation are "highly adaptable to neighborhood conservation", extending the scope of historic preservation efforts beyond the rehabilitation of a specific building ("Remember" 1981, 12).

By 1967, the Department of Housing and Urban Development increased its support of preservation efforts because its staff was so impressed by the success of historic area renewal as an element of urban planning and development that was underway (Birch and Roby 1984). The attention that federal legislation brought to historic preservation resulted in the cooperation of local governments in the preservation effort. No fewer than 832 municipalities were involved in incorporating preservation legislation by 1982 (Birch and Roby 1984). The popularity of historic preservation has continued to grow, gaining increasingly broad acceptance. Today, there are over 1,800 Historic District Commissions and Boards of Architectural Review in towns and cities across the United States (Frank 2002). In addition, over

2,300 landmarks have received national designation since the passage of the Historic Preservation Act (National Park Service 2003). Beyond that, countless sites nationwide have been given various degrees of state or local historic designation.

According to the 1966 act, the stated purposes of historic preservation are to "stabilize and improve property values, foster civic pride, protect the city's attractions to tourists, strengthen the economy, and promote the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people." (Tung 2001, 351) This broad set of objectives relates well to the National Historic Preservation Act's origins at a U.S. Conference of Mayors. Landmark law solidified the historic preservation process as an effective means of accomplishing a broad range of objectives, with a particular utility for economic development.

In addition to the federal legislation supporting the protection of designated historic structures, the 1976 Tax Credit legislation provided fiscal incentive for preservation efforts (Erhlich and Dreie, 1998). The laws protecting historic structures both legitimized and funded the process of historic preservation, bringing increased attention to the potential of eligible buildings. Funding served as a lightning rod, mobilizing support and interest, and people could use historic preservation as one piece of the puzzle for an entire development, in order to bring federal funds to a process that reuses existing buildings with intrinsic value.

The revitalization of New York City's South Street not only benefited from its designation as a landmark in 1968, but also used historic reuse as the foundation for the creation of a new festival marketplace (Metzger 2001). This is one of many examples of commercial development that capitalized on historic preservation. The

next chapter explores how the power of historic preservation has attracted funding and resources to meet the objectives of a diverse array of interests.

Chapter IV. The attraction of preservation

As a means through which urban form can be shaped and controlled, historic preservation has become an attractor of power and money. Diverse groups have now learned to cooperate in an effort to use historic preservation to promote their own vision of the city. According to Diane L. Barthel, "Unlikely bedfellows, including academics, preservationists, developers, and politicians, profit from the exploitation—and sometimes the invention—of local heritage." (1996, 121)

In Atlanta, the studies of regime politics by Clarence Stone indicate that historic preservation policy was subjugated to a development-minded coalition of politicians and business representatives (Newman 2001). A process of social learning resulted in mediation among preservationists, public officials, and developers, from which were born new protections for historic structures. Through this procedure, the benefits of historic preservation were persuasive enough to affect the governing urban regime. A new local policy was adopted through which preservation was used to accomplish a number of the regime's objectives: economic development, diversity, and both heritage-based and new development (Newman 2001).

The redevelopment of New York City's Times Square demonstrates that preservation has replaced renewal efforts in the objectives of pro-growth coalitions. Fulfilling economic objectives within a city context typically requires a politically supportable strategy, and preservation is a means of winning the necessary support for redevelopment (Reichl 1997). The proposed restoration of the historic theaters in Times Square generated widespread public support and resulted in the alliance of the

cultural community with the business community. Through the employment of historic preservation, the focus on "the production of high culture" prevailed over the opposition typically associated with "destructive redevelopment" (Reichl 1997, 524).

The development of the process of historic preservation has been characterized as an evolution "from being the moral concern of an elite few to being a key component of strategies of a culture-led regeneration." (Elkadi and Pendlebury 2001, 75) However, the alliance among preservationists and political and economic forces has called in to question the impartiality of these collaborations (Murtagh 1988). To some, the use of historic preservation to achieve narrow objectives constitutes the "consumption of place." (Boyer 1992, 189) M. Christine Boyer states, "We can continue to puncture holes in our cities' fabric, windows that look back to the past . . . But something will be missing, something closed off, something left out of focus." (1992, 191)

An expanding scope of influence

Often closely associated with historic preservation efforts, the reuse of run-down structures as artists' lofts represents a cultural influence on urban form. This particular form of revitalization brought both reinvestment and renewed attention to central city neighborhoods (Zukin 1982).

In locations with little vacant land and limited speculative opportunities, historic preservation has been recognized as a means of redirecting investment to the central city (Chudacoff 2000). When the widespread construction of highways drained urban areas of business activity and residents, historic preservation was an

opportunity to return the focus to the central cities, allowing them to adapt to a new economic situation. Restoring an existing building often served as a more feasible solution than razing a building and constructing a new one. The historic nature of a building brings to that building focus; even if the building is not used for its original purpose, the history of the building remains an attraction. Historic preservation led to the adaptation of existing city forms and served as a way to bring interest, in the form of people, money, and power, back to the cities.

Historic preservation efforts, however, do not necessarily consider the needs of residents of the neighborhoods near historic districts. In Seattle, dispute over the fate of two downtown historic districts, Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market, poised the artistic values of the cultural elite against the economic values of the business elite (Lee 2001). Following the 1962 World's Fair in Seattle, downtown fringe areas, including Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market, were targeted for redevelopment. The cultural elite challenged the business elite over the question of the fate of these two historic areas. The business elite sought to capitalize on the tourism potential of the two sites in an effort to redevelop the downtown. The cultural elite was interested in maintaining the intellectual and cultural focus on the districts. While some of the control over the process of historic preservation was being wrested from cultural groups, the power was not being distributed to the less advantaged in the area, such as residents facing displacement, but to alternative elite groups with a different focus, economic development. This case study illuminated the varying underlying motivations of historic preservation. It also pointed out that

the local political complexities of these situations clouded the benefits realized by non-elite groups (Lee 2001).

Increasing the worth of once run-down buildings commodifies the structures and their surroundings (Zukin 1982). Rampant speculation may also result, creating an uncertainty in the property market that may be harmful to the local residents (Zukin 1982). Through such outcomes, it is clear that the benefits gained from historic preservation are not necessarily equally distributed (Zukin 1982).

Historic preservation efforts can lead to the gentrification of a neighborhood. In fact, Dolores Hayden cites the efforts of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program for trying to "preserve working people's neighborhoods without gentrification", but she nevertheless finds it "difficult work" (1995, 53). Historic preservation is arguably a more powerful force for gentrification due to the fact that it receives formalization and funding from the government.

Historic preservation, by definition, includes the investment in and improvement of a property, and perhaps an upgrading of its use to one that is more marketable. Neil Smith characterizes projects that solidify the gentrification process of downtowns, such as the South Street Seaport, as serving to advocate an invasion similar to the Westward advance of the frontier (1996). Hence, historic preservation is an attractor of funding, and it leaves properties and surrounding neighborhoods more expensive than before the process took place.

Chapter V. The example of Boston, Mass.

Viewing historic preservation as an expression of power, historic preservation has become a process typically used by a combination of political, economic, or residential groups. The effects of historic preservation on urban form in Boston can be explained by the collaboration of agents with varying levels of power and their employment of historic preservation to achieve their goals. Figure 1 depicts the neighborhoods of Boston as designated by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (2003).

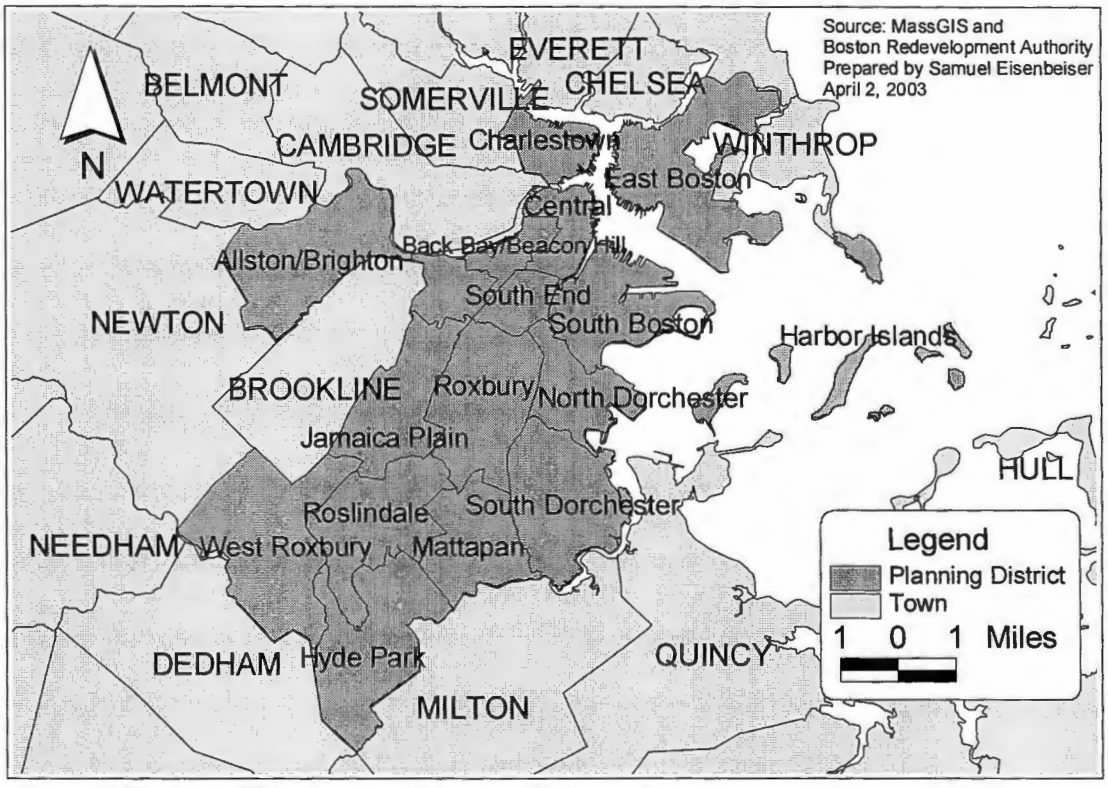

Figure 1. Boston neighborhoods and surrounding towns

Boston formed primarily in a locally determined manner, with less of an influence from formal town planning efforts (Vance 1990). Boston's notable early influences on its form include the relative location of wharfs, railways, shopping

districts, the financial district, and the leveling of two of the cities' three hills to infill the tidal basins, creating the Back Bay neighborhood (Whitehill 1968). But a key influence on its early morphology lay in the nineteenth-century elite's desire to keep the central city free of factories in an effort to legitimize their own cultural status (Domosh 1990).

In a city with a history of elite classes, Boston's West End stood out as a welcome neighborhood for recent immigrants. Based on its proximity to the central business district and a desire to maintain a consumer contingent nearby, the neighborhood was targeted for urban renewal in the early 1950's (Gans 1959). Without the power to use historic preservation to save their neighborhood, the process destroyed the West End neighborhood and displaced all of its residents. This stands as a dramatic example of the threat to a neighborhood lacking the power to employ the process of historic preservation.

In contrast to the helplessness of the West End, the Beacon Hill neighborhood was closely guarded through the state legislature's 1955 creation of the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission (Kennedy 1992). Beacon Hill surrounds the Massachusetts State House, and the socioeconomic class of its residents, along with their close connections with powerful government leaders, afforded it adequate protection from the threat of urban renewal. In 1966, the Back Bay neighborhood was provided a similar commission (Kennedy 1992).

This influence gave credence to the upper-class residential neighborhoods, allowing them to persist and ultimately to expand outward. Boston has been characterized as the most successful example of the achievement of "distinct

historical quarters" through "modern townscape management" (Simms 1992, 39). A complementary relationship between Boston's historical neighborhoods and the city's middle class residents is credited for this outcome (Simms 1992).

Both the citizens and the politicians of Boston wanted to avoid the experience of the West End once its realities were understood. Mayor Collins sought to find a way to use urban renewal funds to "enhance rather than obliterate the unique character of the city." (Whitehill 1968, 202) Edward Logue, who would ultimately head the Boston Redevelopment Authority, initiated historic preservation policies that reversed the course of urban renewal in Boston. His plan for the new government center in the Old Scollay Square area attempted to integrate the new construction of contemporary architecture with the existing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings (Birch and Roby 1984).

The city government's participation in its historic structures continued with the creation of the South End District in 1973. This involvement serves as an early example of the support of gentrification through renewal projects (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989).

The redevelopment of Fanueil Hall marketplace stands as the textbook example of historic preservation through a coalition of political and business entities. In a time when development and investment found a permanent home outside of the city centers, Mayor Kevin White sought to find a way to create a symbol of his image of the new Boston through a creative, attention-grabbing project (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989). Edward Logue had decided that the structures of Fanueil Hall and Quincy Market merited historical protection, but it was the partnership between

Mayor White and real estate developer James Rouse that led to the creation of a pioneering marketplace (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989). This collaboration worked on a number of levels. Mayor White, an architect by education, ensured that the historic integrity of the buildings remained intact with their new use. James Rouse demonstrated a political dexterity in order to secure the right to develop the project and, ultimately, to see it through to completion (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989). The marketplace has served as a prime example of the successful mix of political and economic motives with historic preservation since its record-setting opening in 1976.

While the city's public spaces and historic properties languished in the late 1970's and early 1980's, in 1983, Mayor Flynn created a growth management alliance that included both environmentalists and historic preservationists. This coalition returned the focus to preservation of the urban built environment. Still in power currently, the pro-growth alliance under Mayor Menino has retained the value of preservation as part of its social reform agenda (DiGaetano 1997).

Though traditional conflicts between preservationists and developers erupted over the following years (Kay 1986), a recent collaboration resulted in preservation and reuse efforts such as the conversion of the Custom House into a hotel. The evolution of approaches to historic preservation in Boston reveals the complexity of the partnerships and forces influencing urban form through this process.

Chapter VI. Analysis

Previous sections demonstrated the need for scrutiny and observation of the historic preservation process to monitor its impacts and to align its stated purposes with its effects. The complicated nature of historic preservation calls for novel and comprehensive approaches to increasing our understanding of the ramifications of the process.

The following section introduces a method of exploring historic preservation through a combination of techniques that relate the class aspect of the process to the physical patterns of preservation.

Visual exploration

As a continuation of the study of the relationship between historic preservation in Boston and urban morphology, I examined the spatial pattern of the preservation sites in the city. I created a map to demonstrate the relationship between the locations of historic preservation and the class status of Boston neighborhoods. Of additional interest was evidence of any change in the pattern of preservation over time.

Historically, power and wealth were concentrated in downtown Boston. To an extent, this configuration persists today. Socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of Boston, aggregated by census tract, point toward this. For the purposes of this study, occupation was used as an indicator of socioeconomic status. Specifically, census tracts were categorized based on the percentage of employed residents over 16 years old with professional or managerial occupations. In the city

of Boston in 2000, 43.3 percent of the 285,859 employed residents had professional or managerial occupations (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Among the 157 census tracts, the percentage employed in professional or managerial positions ranged from 4.4 to 76.9 percent, with a median value of 36.3 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2003).

Data regarding the location and date of registration of the historic landmarks in Boston were obtained from the National Register Information System run by the National Park Service (National Park Service 2003). To explore the relationship between historic preservation and socioeconomic status, a visual inspection was made of the pattern of historic sites grouped by date of preservation and superimposed over a map of tract-level percent employment in professional or managerial positions (see Figure 2). The time period groupings are: 1966-72, 1973-79, 1980-86 and 1987-2002.

The visual display reveals a shift over time of the pattern of preservation from the downtown core to the outer neighborhoods of Boston. The pattern of preservation sites is concentrated in the upper class neighborhoods in the 1960's and late 1970s, but the sites are increasingly dispersed as time proceeds. In the later time periods, the sites are scattered throughout the city and are located in tracts with lower levels of employment in professional fields.

Table 1 is a numeric summary of the data depicted in the map. The data shown indicates the percentage of sites registered during each of the four time periods broken down by the category of census tract within which the sites are located. Again, the census tracts are categorized by percent employment in professional or managerial positions. The shift over time is also evident from this

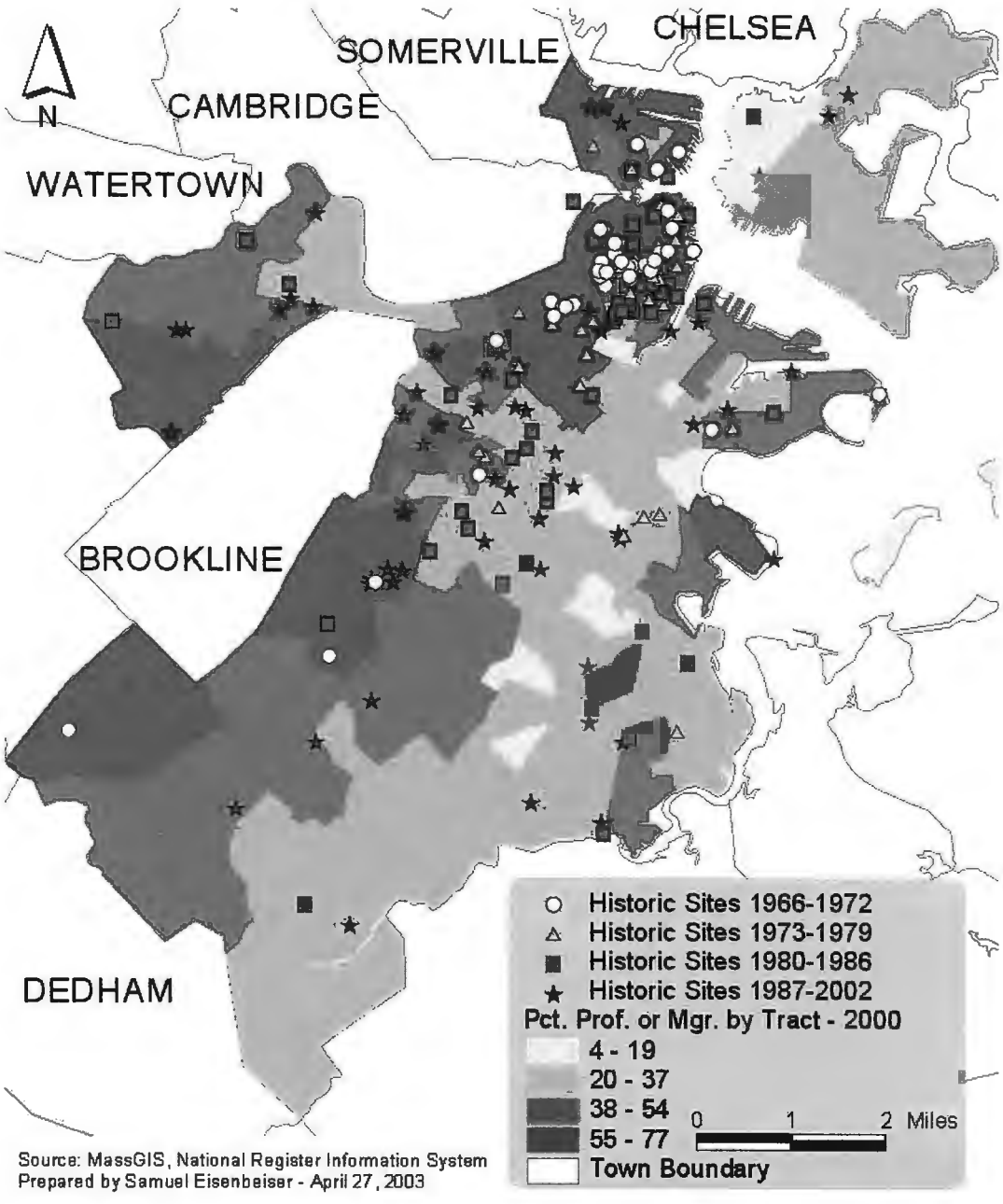

Figure 2. Percent of Employed Persons over 16 years old in Professional or Managerial Occupations, by Census Tract, Boston, Mass., 2000, and Historic Sites by Date of Registration.

table. During the first two time periods, the majority of historic preservation sites were registered in the two higher categories of professional employment. In the latter two time periods, the historic sites are shared among the three upper tract categories.

Table 1. – Distribution of historic preservation sites by time period and percentage in professional or managerial occupations in host census tract, Boston, Mass., 2000

	Time Period			
Pct. Prof.	1966-74	1975-79	1980-86	1987-2002
4-19	3%	1%	3%	3%
20-37	8%	16%	45%	35%
38-54	26%	19%	31%	30%
55-77	63%	63%	22%	32%

Source: MassGIS and National Register Information System

The apparent shift may indicate an evolution of the use of historic preservation to shape the city. The process of historic preservation leaves an imprint on the city's morphology, and this imprint reveals the underlying social process. In this way, historic preservation serves as a link between individual agents and the shape of the urban landscape, where participation in this process varies based on class (Bobic 1990). This shift evident through the visual exploration coincides with a change in the practice of historic preservation from an exclusive procedure appropriated by upper-income classes to a more widespread process with a broader spectrum of participation.

Through this examination, the changing pattern of preservation in the city of Boston lends insight into the complex social nature of the historic preservation process. By showing that the spatial pattern of preservation is not proportionally distributed, we reveal the vulnerability of the process of historic preservation. We can then begin to understand better how to observe the process and its effects. This is a fundamental first step towards a broader understanding of a process that is characterized by piecemeal progression. The next element of this analysis also takes

a comprehensive approach in relating preservation in Boston to the socioeconomic status of the city's residents.

Statistical analysis

The quantitative element of this research aims to determine the influence of a social class structure on the incidence of historic preservation by exploring the relationship between the preservation of historic buildings and districts and the socioeconomic characteristics of residents near the specific preservation sites, using the city of Boston as a case study. The specific focus is the socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of neighborhoods in which historic preservation has occurred. To explore how social structure influences the process of historic preservation, population descriptors reflecting social class status were used as indicators. Historic preservation is scrutinized in terms of the frequency of incidence within each census tract.

The data regarding the specific historic preservation sites come from the National Register Information System database established by the National Park Service (National Park Service 2003). Data extracted from this database itemize each structure or district that has been recognized as historic under the National Historic Landmarks Program. Along with the name of the structure or district, the database provides information regarding both date of recognition and geographic location.

Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis that, within a context of a social hierarchy that limits access to certain political processes, historic preservation

is related to socioeconomic status. The first hypothesis is that historic preservation is concentrated in the vicinity of residents of higher socioeconomic status. My interest is to evaluate the possibility that upper class residents are more likely to preserve historic sites in their own neighborhoods than residents of lower class neighborhoods are.

The second hypothesis is that the level of concentration of historic preservation sites in upper class neighborhoods has changed from the time of the passage of landmark law to present day. A shift might indicate a change in the motivation or participation or some other aspect of the historic preservation process. My interest is to determine if, as implied by the Seattle example cited above, patterns of historic preservation reflect a change in the interests motivating it, from chiefly cultural to economic development. This would relocate the focus of historic preservation from architecture of note in wealthy areas to more broadly distributed preservation opportunities in lower class neighborhoods. This would be evident through a decrease in the concentration of historic preservation in census tracts of a higher socioeconomic status.

The unit of analysis was the census tract. Measures of household income level, education level and occupation were explored as indicators of social class standing for the neighborhoods. Also, data regarding the racial composition of each neighborhood were examined. Ultimately, education level was not used as an independent variable in the regression analysis because it exhibited multicollinearity with the occupation variable, meaning that much of the variability in education level

was explained by occupation, and vice versa. The following three variables were used to indicate socioeconomic status:

Percent of residents 16 years and older employed in a professional or managerial position

Percent of residents indicating "white alone" as their "race"

Percent of households with an income exceeding $39,000

For the purposes of the analysis, each variable was transformed by using its logarithm in the regression. Similarly, as the measure of incidence of historic preservation for each tract, the transformed variable that was used was based 10 Log of Historic Sites Registered per Square Mile plus one. The transformations were conducted to address the skew of the distributions of the data and to establish a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

For each of the tests, the following regression equation was estimated:

$$\textit{Ratio of historic designations to total land area} = a + b_1\textit{*Percent Professionals} + b_2\textit{*Percent White} + b_3\textit{*Percent Household Incomes over \$39,000} + b_5\textit{*Percentage of Multi-Family Units} + b_4\textit{*Average Building Age.}$$

Given a lack of quantitative analysis relating historic preservation to socioeconomic status (Frank 2002), the process of identifying appropriate variables for this model was conducted without the benefit of suitable prior examples. The control variables, Average Building Age and Percentage of Multi-Family Units, were chosen based on the assumption that they were not directly related to socioeconomic

status but may have an impact on historic preservation. Average building age would be expected to have a correlation with the incidence of historic preservation since an older average building age would indicate a higher number of potential candidates for preservation. Furthermore, older, intact neighborhoods may be targeted for preservation since designated sites would fit readily within their context.

The percentage of multifamily homes in a census tract was also chosen based on its potential influence on historic preservation. Multifamily homes may be less likely candidates for historic preservation. For example, multifamily homes may be less easily adapted to a use other than residential, limiting the potential for adaptive reuse of a historic site. If currently being rented out to multiple tenants, deed restrictions, politics, or lack of interest from a non-resident owner may limit the likelihood of a building being historically designated. While some multifamily neighborhoods were constructed as working class housing, others were constructed as upper class single-family homes that are now used as apartments, and either type of structure may currently feature residents of a range of socioeconomic status. However imperfect, percent multifamily homes was used as a control variable in an effort to construct a comprehensive model.

To test the first hypothesis, the regression was run using the total number of historic sites registered in Boston between 1966 and 2002. To test the second hypothesis, a similar set of two regression analyses were performed, using the same equation and the same variables. However, the historic designations were divided into two categories based on date of registration, 1966-1979 and 1980-2002. The results of the regression analyses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. – Regression Equations

Time Period	Value	Unadjusted Constant	Log Professionals/ Managers	Pct. Log White alone	Log Pct. Household Income over $39,000	Pct. unit Structures	Multi-Housing	Average Building Age	R-squared
1966-2002	B	-0.514	2.555	-0.113	-1.133	0.905		0.22	0.273
	(SE)		(0.49)	(0.184)	(0.625)	(0.51)		(0.005)	
	Beta		0.537	-0.050	-0.186	0.151		0.310	
	Sig.		0.000	0.541	0.072	0.078		0.000	
1966-1979	B	-0.605	2.362	-0.028	-0.675	1.067		0.016	0.288
	(SE)		(0.457)	(0.171)	(0.583)	(0.476)		(0.005)	
	Beta		0.527	-0.013	-0.118	0.189		0.239	
	Sig.		0.000	0.872	0.249	0.026		0.002	
1980-2002	B	0.08	1.369	-0.146	-1.096	0.229		0.01	0.068
	(SE)		(0.53)	(0.199)	(0.676)	(0.551)		(0.006)	
	Beta		0.301	-0.068	-0.188	0.04		0.145	
	Sig.		0.011	0.462	0.107	0.678		0.102	

Dependent Variable: Log of Historic Sites Registered per square mile, plus 1

The first equation, covering time period 1966-2002, tests the first hypothesis, that historic preservation is concentrated in tracts of higher socioeconomic status. The top section in Table 2 shows that only the occupation variable and Average Building Age have significance levels below 0.05, so only in these cases can we reject the null hypothesis that there is no linear relationship between these variables and the dependent variable. Based on this, the variability explained by the model is primarily a contribution of these two variables. Since Average Building Age was included as a control variable assumed not to be related to socioeconomic class, the variable Log of Percentage in Professional or Managerial Occupations is the remaining socioeconomic indicator with an influence on the incidence of historic preservation.

The R-squared value for the first equation is 0.273 indicating that about 27 percent of the variability in incidence of historic preservation is explained by the

variables Log of Percentage in Professional or Managerial Occupations and Average Building Age. The occupation coefficient, 2.555, is positive, indicating a positive relationship between percentage in professional or managerial occupations and registered historic sites per square mile. This outcome indicates that, using occupational status as an indicator, tracts with a higher socioeconomic class experienced a higher incidence of historic preservation over the entire time period, confirming the first hypothesis.

The second and third equations test the second hypothesis that the concentration of historic preservation in tracts of higher socioeconomic status changed during the timeframe since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. The results of the regression indicate that the variable measuring professional or managerial occupations was positively related to the incidence of historic preservation during the early timeframe, 1966-1979, but is less so during the latter timeframe, 1980-2002.

The middle section in Table 2, based on a regression using historic preservation during the early timeframe, shows that the occupation variable, Percent Multi-Unit Structures and Average Building Age have significance levels below 0.05, so in these cases can we reject the null hypothesis that there is no linear relationship between these variables and the dependent variable. Based on this, the variability explained by the model is primarily a contribution of these three variables. Since both Percent Multi-Unit Structures and Average Building Age were included as control variables assumed not to be related to socioeconomic class, the variable Log of Percentage in Professional or Managerial Occupations is the remaining

socioeconomic indicator with an influence on the incidence of historic preservation. This result is similar to the first equation, nearly 29 percent of the variability in preservation is explained by the three influential variables, and the relationship between professional or managerial occupation level and preservation is positive.

Comparing the middle section with the lower section, the influence on historic preservation sites is limited to Log of Percentage in Professional or Managerial Occupations, the only variable with a significance level below 0.05. This variable explains less than seven percent of the variability in historic preservation sites per square mile, and while the relationship between professional or managerial occupation level and preservation is positive, the occupation coefficient is 1.369, compared to the earlier timeframe in which the occupation coefficient is 2.362. Hence, during the later timeframe, as the occupation variable increases, the dependent variable increases to a lesser degree than during the earlier timeframe. This result reflects a decrease between the two time periods in the influence of socioeconomic class, as measured by occupational status, on historic preservation, confirming the second hypothesis.

I conducted an additional analysis to further support my assertion that the relationship between historic preservation and socioeconomic status is different between the first time period and the second. The t statistic was computed using the following equation (see Wright 1982, 525):

$$t = (b_{1A}-b_{1B})/\sqrt{(V_A S^2 b_{1A} + V_B S^2 B_{1B})/(V_A+V_B)}$$

where b_{1A} is the occupation coefficient for the first time period, b_{1B} is the occupation coefficient for the second time period, S^2b_{1A} and S^2b_{1B} are the standard errors of the

coefficients for the first and the second time periods, respectively, and V_A and V_B are the degrees of freedom for the first and second time periods, respectively. The resultant t statistic is 1.85, which corresponds to a probability of 0.0323 using a one-tailed test. Based on this result, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the occupation coefficients of the two time periods can be rejected. At a 95 percent significance level, the influence that occupation had on the incidence of historic preservation during the first period is higher than that of the second period, further verifying the second hypothesis.

Current literature discusses a number of potential explanations for the historic shift in the spatial distribution of preservation sites. One possibility is that the motivation behind historic preservation efforts has changed from cultural to economic. Preservation efforts in both New York and Seattle demonstrate that business interests and pro-growth coalitions have recognized the capability of historic preservation as an economic development tool (Lee 2000; Reichl 1997). Hence, it is argued, historic preservation efforts no longer focus primarily on architecture of note in wealthy neighborhoods but are instead targeted towards depressed areas viewed as in need of outside investment. If this were the case, it would reflect not a democratization of the process of historic preservation but an appropriation of the process by a new elite group for a new set of narrow objectives.

Another possible explanation for the shift in preservation patterns over time is that the National Trust for Historic Preservation has made a concerted effort since 1980 to broaden the spectrum of historic preservation (Hayden 1995). If so, the organization may have made efforts to turn the focus towards preservation of

structures in new locations throughout the city of Boston. Similarly, this situation would not necessarily indicate broader participation in the preservation process.

A third possibility is that participation in the process has in fact become more widespread and diverse, and that this reality is reflected in the changes in the distribution of preservation sites. Designation of landmarks and buildings with particular meaning to historically underrepresented segments of the population may be occurring due to deliberate efforts of new types of participants (Hayden 1995). Residents of a lower socioeconomic status may be learning how to engage in the historic preservation process in their own neighborhoods.

Another potential explanation is that preservation efforts were redirected due to saturation in upper class neighborhoods. These areas may be running out of potential candidates for preservation that are not already designated or located within a historic district.

Limitations of the reseach

The use of the most recent census data as an indication of socioeconomic status of the census tracts leaves some questions about causality between class status and historic preservation unanswered. It distances the socioeconomic status of a neighborhood from the historic preservation process, clouding the explanatory power of the methodology. Using census data that predates the registration of the subject historic landmarks may lend a different insight into the process. The decision to use 2000 census data was based partly on the logistical limitations of this research.

Relating tract-level data to the process of historic preservation, which has been ongoing for over forty years, is a complicated issue. While imperfect, the use of the most recent census data represents an initial effort towards relating socioeconomic status to historic preservation. Visual inspection of census tract maps surrounding the subject time periods showing median household income has revealed both areas of historically fixed socioeconomic status and areas subject to fluctuation. As an example, a census tract in the Beacon Hill neighborhood, the location of a significant proportion the preservation sites between 1966-1973, had the highest median family income in 1960 (Brunsman 1962) and featured the third highest median household income in 1999 (U. S. Census Bureau 2003). Similarly, a tract in Central Boston, which had the highest number of preservation sites registered between 1980-1986, had the second lowest median family income in 1960 (Brunsman 1962) and remained in the bottom ten percent of tracts by household income in 1999 (U. S. Census Bureau 2003).

Further research may be able to follow up on this study with a more detailed analysis of the relationship between historic preservation and socioeconomic status. The incidence of historic preservation during each ten-year period since 1960 could be related to the socioeconomic status of tracts at the time of the preceding census.

Chapter VIII. Conclusion

As a relatively new influence on morphology, historic preservation is similar in many ways to the other known influences, particularly through its representation of the power structure in an urban area. However, historic preservation differs from the other influences on morphology in that historic preservation can assert itself independently and act to reverse the course of change. Where morphology focuses on change over time (Hall 1997), historic preservation represents an effort to ensure that change over time no longer occurs, in effect, removing time from the equation.

As a result of historic events that may have occurred years in the past, a building that might otherwise be viewed as commonplace is imbued with significance. Groups in present-day society reacts to this significance by seeking to employ this pre-existent meaning for their own purposes. The argument that Vance makes that space is a reality that is a "force operating independently of institutions and as a medium for people to use in expressing many institutionally-derived objectives" (1990, 11) is demonstrated through historic preservation. The historic significance of buildings and efforts to preserve these buildings based on this significance can be expected to exert a noteworthy force of its own accord on present and future urban form.

Anngret Simms states, "the need to take root in a town by identifying with its history has a particular urgency in the post-modern world." (1992, 40) As the example of Boston demonstrates, historic preservation has a motivating force that ultimately manifests itself as an expression of power. Its ability to control both the

built and the symbolic environments gives historic preservation a pervasive influence that impacts the evolution of the urban landscape itself.

This paper discusses this power of historic preservation and the complications arising from its status in the public realm. Historic preservation has achieved widespread acceptance, but the subjective nature of historic significance has complicated efforts to scrutinize the preservation process as it has gained increasing popularity. Thus, just as piecemeal preservation efforts have had an insidious effect on the urban landscape, the unquestioned appeal of the historic preservation process has rendered it a force among the political influences on urban environments. Novel and comprehensive approaches such as the strategy employed by this study are increasingly necessary to continuously enhance our understanding of the process. Increased understanding is needed to balance the power of historic preservation with the overall needs of a city and its people.

The influences on historic preservation are both diverse and nebulous. A more accurate understanding of the process calls for continual study and varied approaches, including quantitative methods (Frank 2002). But statistical and spatial analyses must be followed up with qualitative approaches, such as the use of interviews and case studies, in order to understand more intimately the political and social aspects of historic preservation. Opportunities for future research include the motivations behind historic preservation, including further analysis of additional countervailing arguments regarding influences on the incidence of historic preservation. Case studies exploring the relationship between investment patterns and the trends of historic preservation would shed light on both the motivations and

the outcomes of this process. Finally, the aforementioned procedure of relating historic census data to the registration of landmarks and historic districts over the subsequent decade would achieve a more intimate understanding of the relationship between socioeconomic status and historic preservation.

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